

Application No. 10/629,806
Response dated February 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of November 29, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. No amendment has been made in this Response. Claims 11 and 13 were found to be allowable.

(1) Claims 1-10, 12, and 14-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishibashi et al. (US 6,579,657 B1) in view of Vasta (US 4,572,870). Section 9 of the Office Action.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claim 1 because the teaching of Vasta is irrelevant to the second resist material taught by Ishibashi et al., so there is no basis or motivation to combine the references.

As disclosed at col.1, lines 19-20; col. 5, lines 46-49; col. 6, lines 21-28; col. 7, lines 57-58; col. 8, lines 42-43; and col. 9, lines 26-27, the invention of Vasta is directed to a coating material for protecting metal substrates, wood, electrodes, grit blasted steel and aluminum panels and a glass panel. The applied coating composition is wholly cured on the substrate (co.5, lines 50-55), and there is no coated portion to be developed or removed after the coating. The coating composition cannot be selectively developed or removed. The teaching of Vasta cannot make any resist pattern thickening material.

On the other hand, the material taught by Ishibashi et al. is directed to forming a fine resist pattern. In particular, the crosslinked layer 4 of the second resist 2 is formed on the first resist pattern 1a. See Fig. 2 of Ishibashi et al. Further, the non-crosslinked portion of the second resist 2 of Ishibashi et al. is developed or removed (col. 6, lines 10-13). These features, although not taught by Vasta, are essential for the invention of Ishibashi et al., because otherwise, no resist pattern can be formed in the invention of Ishibashi et al.

Thus, even if Vasta merely discloses a nitrogen-containing composition, the teaching of Vasta is no basis or motivation to be combined with Ishibashi et al. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Regarding claim 3, the bicyclic amidine of Vasta is added to decrease curing time and increase toughness (col. 4, lines 33-35). In other words, it is considered that the bicyclic amidine is added to help the curing agent taught at col. 3, lines 16-25. However, Ishibashi et al. do not teach such curing agent. Thus, there is no basis to add the tertiary alkyl ammonium hydroxide of Vasta in the second resist composition of Ishibashi et al. There is no reason to modify Ishibashi et al. in view of Vasta.

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Regarding claim 4, the coating composition of Vasta is not considered water-soluble or alkali-soluble. Example 1 of Vasta includes chlorosulfonated ethylene vinyl acetate polymer, which is provided in a toluene solution, and Example 2 also uses toluene solution. Generally speaking, a polymer soluble in toluene is not water-soluble or alkali-soluble. Thus, the properties of the compositions taught by Vasta and Ishibashi et al. are completely different, so that there is no reason to modify Ishibashi et al. in view of Vasta.

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

(2) In view of the above, claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.


If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP


Shuji Yoshizaki
Limited Recognition

SY/mt
1250 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 822-1100
Fax: (202) 822-1111

Attachment: Limited Recognition

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